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**Letter to the Editor from First Lady Jenny Sanford**  
**Smoke Out Lung Cancer**

**Columbia, S.C. – November 9, 2005** – November is National Lung Cancer Awareness month, a disease that kills more Americans each year than breast cancer, prostate and colorectal cancers combined. In South Carolina, almost one-third of all cancer deaths in 2002 were due to lung cancer, and 2,730 deaths are expected in 2005.

87 percent of lung cancer deaths are tobacco-related, and nearly a quarter of South Carolinians jeopardize their health by smoking. Once diagnosed, lung cancer has often passed curable stages, resulting in one of the lowest recovery rates among cancers. Only about 15 percent of patients live five years past diagnosis.

Former smokers are at a higher risk, but after ten years of not smoking, risk is reduced by as much as 50 percent. Other high risk categories are people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or who have been exposed to second-hand smoke, air pollution, radiation, radon or asbestos. If you have risk factors, please consult your physician – early detection is key for survival.

Studies indicate that eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day can reduce risk for lung cancer. Yet by far, your greatest defense is not smoking. As quitting can be extremely difficult, the Healthy SC Challenge provides weekly tips to encourage you, found at [www.healthysc.gov](http://www.healthysc.gov). Also, you can also join the Great American Smokeout by quitting for the day of November 17, 2005 – maybe this will be the day you quit for good. For more information on lung cancer, contact the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4-CANCER or [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov).

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*The Healthy SC Challenge is the Sanford family's effort to motivate all South Carolinians to do a little more to live a healthier lifestyle. The Challenge is meant to encourage counties, individuals, communities and organizations across the state to engage in friendly competition to improve health in three categories - nutrition, exercise and smoking cessation. Individuals and groups can find tips for healthier living, report success stories and register upcoming events on the Challenge's website: [www.healthysc.gov](http://www.healthysc.gov). For more information on the Healthy SC Challenge, please contact Meghan McGuire at 803-737-2325 or [healthysc@gov.sc.gov](mailto:healthysc@gov.sc.gov).*